

Message Text

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73

ACTION EA-14

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R 210240Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8406
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE JAKARTA 9954

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, EGEN, ID

SUBJ: SUHARTO PLEDGES TO RAISE ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' SALARIES

1. ACCORDING PRESS, PRESIDENT SUHARTO TOLD GROUP OF "MODEL TEACHERS" ON AUGUST 18 THAT SALARIES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS WILL BE RAISED BY AN UNSPECIFIED AMOUNT NEXT YEAR TO EXCEED THOSE OF OTHER GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES. HOWEVER, PRESIDENT SAID THAT INCREASE WOULD NOT MATCH NINE-FOLD SALARY BOOST RECEIVED BY FINANCE MINISTRY EMPLOYEES IN 1971.

2. COMMENT: THIS IS GOOD NEWS AS FAR AS IT GOES. LAMENTABLE SALARY LEVELS ARE A ROOT CAUSE OF INDONESIA'S PERILOUS EDUCATIONAL DEFICIENCIES. SOME TIME AGO EDUCATION MINISTER SUMANTRI (RECENTLY BACK FROM NEW YORK FOLLOWING TWO MONTHS OF TREATEMENT FOR SERIOUS AILMENT) EXTRACTED PROMISE FROM PRESIDENT TO TRIPLE TEACHERS' SALARIES THIS YEAR. ALTHOUGH SUHARTO ANNOUNCEMENT DID NOT SPECIFY SIZE OF INCREASE, IT IS APPARENTLY THE RESULT OF SUMANTRI'S PLEA, PLUS INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF INTERMINISTERIAL

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"SPECIAL TEAM" TO INVESTIGATE TEACHER WELFARE WHICH IS NOW

AT WORK.

3. UNFORTUNATELY, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' BASE SALARIES ARE SO MINISCULE (ROUGHLY \$10 PER MONTH AVERAGE) THAT EVEN TRIPLING THEM MAY HAVE LITTLE IMMEDIATE EFFECT ON MOONLIGHTING AND GENERALLY LOW STANDARDS. (IT IS STILL ANYTHING BUT CLEAR HOW MUCH EFFECT WIDELY PUBLICIZED MINISTRY OF FINANCE PAY BOOST HAS HAD ON CORRUPTION, INEFFICIENCY, ETC.) UNDERLYING DILEMMA REMAINS THAT DUE RELENTLESS GROWTH OF POPULATION, MERELY KEEPING SCHOOL SYSTEM AT PRESENT LEVELS OF QUALITY AND PER CAPITA ENROLLMENT POSES MASSIVE FINANCIAL CHALLENGE TO GOI. NEVERTHELESS, SUHARTO'S ANNOUNCEMENT REPRESENTS WELCOME FIRST STEP, AS WELL AS HIGH LEVEL RECOGNITION (INFREQUENT IN THE PAST) OF THE GRAVITY OF THE PROBLEM.

GALBRAITH

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